

REGISTER OF CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS

Date of entry in Register: 23 March 2004
Name of applicant/court: The Society for the Promotion of Community Standards Inc
Applicant to the Labelling Body: Buena Vista International New Zealand
Title of Publication: Kill Bill Part 1
Other Known Title(s): Kill Bill - Part 1
Kill Bill Vol. 1
Director(s): Quentin Tarantino
Producer(s): Quentin Tarantino, Lawrence Bender
Format: Film 35mm
Country of Origin: USA
Language(s): English, Japanese
Distributor: Buena Vista International

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Components of film:

Feature:	Kill Bill Part 1	Running time:	111.51
Trailers:	Nil	Running time:	
		Total Running Time:	111.51

Excision/Alteration: No Excisions Recommended.

Reason(s) for Excision:

Not Applicable.

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Classification Decision:

Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 18 years.

Display Conditions:

Nil.

Descriptive Note:

Contains graphic violence and offensive language.

Direction to issue a label has been given on: 23 March 2004

SUMMARY OF THE REASONS FOR DECISION:

Section 3(1)

The Board considers that, pursuant to section 3(1) of the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 (the Act), *Kill Bill Part 1* passes through the subject matter gateways of sex, crime, cruelty and violence in such a manner that the availability of the publication is likely to be “injurious to the public good” if unrestricted. Scenes of a sexual nature include alluding to the previous rape of the comatose woman and an attempted rape by the man who climbs on top of her. Secondly, sex is alluded to when O-Ren Ishii is seen astride the yakuza, said to be a paedophile. Thirdly, the bar scene in which Gogo, in a school uniform, stabs a man who answers affirmatively to her question that he wishes to have sex with her.

With respect to crime, the criminal activity ranges from numerous murders and assaults (including with weapons), through to the more minor driving offences. Violence and cruelty is pervasive throughout the film, with mass murder at the wedding and at the restaurant, and the murder of other individuals by knife and samurai sword.

The Board finds that the numerous descriptions, depictions or expressions of the “gateway” matters of sex, violence, cruelty and crime, although exaggerated, are of sufficient magnitude to be likely to be “injurious to the public good” unless restricted to an adult viewing audience.

Section 3(2)

In terms of section 3(2)(a) of the Act, the Board considered, in particular, the anime sequence involving O-Ren Ishii when she is astride the alleged paedophile. It also considered the bar scene with Gogo. The Board finds there was nothing in either scene to encourage viewers to see any possible sexual exploitation of either O-Ren Ishii or Gogo as a positive matter. Both men are murdered as a result of their contact with the child or young person.

Matters under section 3(2)(b) of the Act are applicable in the implied rape of “The Bride” when comatose and the attempted rape.

The Board did not find that the way both of these activities were presented in the film “promoted or supported or tended to promote or support” the activity. Both the hospital orderly and the attempted rapist were dealt to by “The Bride” with considerable force.

Section 3(2)(c) of the Act does not apply.

Section 3(2)(f) of the Act is applicable in the attempted rape scene where the man is bitten on the lip or tongue and killed, and the orderly’s head is slammed in the door. There are at least two decapitations and a massacre at the wedding and in the restaurant.

The Board does not find these activities “promoted or supported or tended to promote or support” because the violence is so far fetched, farcical, unreal, and cartoon-like. Emulation is unlikely.

Section 3(3)

The Board finds that section 3(3)(a)(i) of the Act applies, examples being the massacres at the wedding and the restaurant, the decapitations, and the individual murders. The effect, however, is lessened by the manner in which the activities are presented. The serious consequences of torture, physical harm and cruelty are not dwelled upon and are portrayed as farcically and unrealistically unharmed.

Section 3(3)(a)(ii) of the Act applies in the paedophile and bar scenes. The extent and degree of sexual violence or coercion is, however, limited to no more than an implication, particularly in the anime format. This provision of the Act applies also to the suggested rape of the comatose woman and the attempted rape of “The Bride”.

The extent and degree and manner in which these items are described, depicted, or otherwise dealt with are by implication and an attempted rape. In terms of extent and degree, the descriptions are not graphic, involve clothed bodies, and are not portrayed in a voyeuristic manner.

Section 3(3)(a)(iii) of the Act applies to the implied rape of a comatose woman but, as it is implied only, the extent and degree and manner is more limited.

Section 3(3)(a)(iv) of the Act applies to the paedophile and bar scenes, but the fact that the parties are clothed, or it is an anime scene, reduces the impact.

Section 3(3)(c) of the Act applies when a number of the characters killed are without identity and are hence dehumanised. The smacking of one man on the bottom by “The Bride” may be seen as demeaning. These are not major features of the film, although the scene in which they occur is major.

In respect of section 3(3)(d) of the Act, the Board finds the portrayal of, for instance, murder and assault, too exaggerated to be taken seriously as promoting the criminal acts depicted in it.

Section 3(4)

In respect of section 3(4)(a) of the Act, the Board finds that the dominant effect is of a cartoonish, ultra surreal, even unreal, movie. The dominant effect on the mind of adult viewers is likely to be that *Kill Bill Part 1* is not intended to be a serious film depicting reality.

Pursuant to section 3(4)(b) of the Act, there is spectacular cinematography and use of colour.

With respect to section 3(4)(c) of the Act, there are mixed media reviews but the film is generally well directed and creative. Tarantino is a noted director, recognised by film experts and the wider movie-going public.

Pursuant to section 3(4)(d) of the Act, *Kill Bill Part 1* is aimed at adults who like action, black humour, and a pastiche of 1970's movies. It also appeals to followers of Tarantino. This film is Part One of a two part film which may have a message beyond Part One.

With regard to section 3(4)(f) of the Act, the board finds the classification given to the film is also appropriate for video and DVD formats of the publication. This is a publication that should be limited more by age than format.

Excisions

It is the Board's view that any excisions would reduce the overall purpose and effect of the film to such a degree as to change the publication significantly. The Board finds that the unreal cartoonish and exaggerated nature of the activities reduces the effect of the violence in the film.

New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Age Restriction

In the Board's expert opinion, the restriction of viewing by persons under 18 years of age is justified due to society's wish to protect children and young people from likely injury, yet provide the minimum interference with rights under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. The extent, nature and presentation of activities under section 3(1) of the Act are "likely to be injurious to the public good" if *Kill Bill Part 1* is not so restricted.

Differing Media

The Board finds that if *Kill Bill Part 1* is released on video or DVD and is identical in format to the film, the video and DVD formats should hold the same classification as the film.

OFLC No: 400333